



General Assembly

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108th plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Deiss (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 114

Admission of new Members to the United Nations

Application for admission (A/65/900)

Letter from the President of the Security Council (A/65/905)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.84)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to invite the General Assembly to consider the positive recommendation by the Security Council on the application for admission to membership in the United Nations of the Republic of South Sudan.

The Security Council has recommended the admission of the Republic of South Sudan to membership in the United Nations, as stated in document A/65/905. In this connection, a draft resolution has been issued as document A/65/L.84.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.84.

Mr. Radebe (South Africa): I wish to express South Africa's gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Rwanda, His Excellency Mr. Eugène-Richard Gasana, Chair of the Group of African States for the month of July, for affording my delegation the singular honour of introducing this historic draft resolution on behalf of African Member States.

On 9 July 2011, the world witnessed the birth of a new State of Africa, the Republic of South Sudan. After decades of war that caused millions of deaths, in 2005 the people of the Sudan made a historic breakthrough when they agreed on a plan to resolve their differences and begin a journey towards lasting peace. That agreement was enshrined in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, entered into between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. One of the key pillars of the Agreement was the right to a referendum on the self-determination and independence of South Sudan.

The General Assembly's adoption of resolution 1514 (XV), on 14 December 1960, was a significant milestone in the struggle for decolonization, self-determination and independence. The resolution served as an inspiration to the majority of people on the African continent and elsewhere in their struggle against colonialism, oppression and apartheid.

The founding fathers and mothers of Africa agreed in the founding documents of the Organization of African Unity and the Constitutive Act of its successor, the African Union, to maintain colonial borders inherited after independence, given the sensitivities and complexities of that colonial inheritance. It was for that reason that the African Union, immediately following the 9 January referendum on self-determination by the people of southern Sudan, adopted a solemn declaration in which it recognized the exceptional challenges inherited from the colonial past, as well as the unique nature of the

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national question confronting the people of the Sudan. In that regard, African heads of State and Government acknowledge that the Sudan represents an exceptional case that does not negate the sacrosanct principle of respect for colonial borders.

I stand here before the General Assembly with the distinct honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of African States, the draft resolution on the admission of the Republic of South Sudan to membership in the United Nations, comfortable in the knowledge that this act in no way creates a precedent for secessionist tendencies. It was for this reason that the Republic of the Sudan was the first country to recognize the independence and sovereignty of its new neighbour, the Republic of South Sudan. Draft resolution A/65/L.84 has the unanimous and full support of the African States Members of the United Nations, as well as of the African Union.

As Africans, we continue to be grateful for the role that multilateral organizations in general, and the United Nations in particular, have played in our quest for independence, freedom and self-determination. We reaffirm our collective faith in and commitment to the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter.

With the support of the entire continent and all peace-loving people across the world, we present for the Assembly's consideration the draft resolution contained in document A/65/L.84, on the admission of the Republic of South Sudan for membership in the United Nations. History has bestowed on all of us here the rare and distinct honour of witnessing the admission of the Republic of South Sudan as the 193rd Member State of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.84, entitled "Admission of the Republic of South Sudan to membership in the United Nations". I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/65/L.84, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Ireland,

Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Panama, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey and Ukraine.

The President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that the General Assembly accepts the recommendation of the Security Council and adopts draft resolution A/65/L.84 by acclamation?

Draft resolution A/65/L.84 was adopted (resolution 65/308).

The President (*spoke in French*): I therefore declare the Republic of South Sudan admitted to membership of the United Nations.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the delegation of the Republic of South Sudan to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

The delegation of the Republic of South Sudan was escorted to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me to welcome, on behalf of the General Assembly, the Republic of South Sudan as a new Member of the United Nations. This is a historic and joyous moment not only for Africa, but also for the community of nations. Today, we welcome among us this young country, whose independence was formally declared in Juba, its capital, last Saturday. That is remarkable.

The independence of South Sudan is in fact the culmination of a process launched several years ago. The negotiation and implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, as well as the referendum that was held in January, are examples of the peaceful settlement of a conflict situation and a model of peace and cooperation for the good of peoples. I pay tribute to the Sudan for having accepted the outcome of the referendum and, moreover, for having been the first country to recognize that young nation.

The United Nations backed the process leading to independence, and is ready to build on that success and to continue to support the Sudan and South Sudan in their effort to find a peaceful solution to outstanding issues and to live in peace and harmony.

Today, we welcome South Sudan to the community of nations, equal to all other Member States and with the same rights and responsibilities. The universality of the United Nations and the values enshrined in its Charter are thereby enhanced. I am confident that South Sudan will help to promote the objectives of security, peace, prosperity, friendship and cooperation among peoples, as advocated by the United Nations. That is for the good of the people of South Sudan, the region and the entire African continent.

I wish the people and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan peace, prosperity and success. I congratulate them on their recent independence, and wish them a warm welcome as the 193rd Member State in the community of the United Nations.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: At this moment, in this place, the world gathers to say in one voice, "Welcome South Sudan. Welcome to the community of nations". Just days ago, I was honoured to attend the independence ceremony in Juba. I felt the energy, the potential and the pure joy of the world's newest nation. In my eyes, the rising flag symbolized the rising hopes of the people of South Sudan — all those who endured the long civil war, all those who lost so many loved ones, all those who left their homes and fled their communities, and all those who held fast to hope.

Now they have reached an important milestone, but the journey continues. Yes, the task ahead is great, but so, too, is the country's potential, with its abundant natural resources, its arable land, the waters of the Nile and, of course, its proud and hard-working people. We pledge to help South Sudan shape its future as we help the region consolidate its gains. Together, we salute the leaders of both the Sudan and South Sudan. They showed courage and commitment in bringing about a successful referendum that expressed the democratic will of the people.

Matters of borders, the sharing of resources and migration should be dealt with as soon as possible. It is imperative that they resolve their outstanding differences with the same pragmatism and leadership they have each shown so far. The well-being and future prosperity of each depends on the other. South and

North share a common destiny. They must see a future as true partners, not as rivals.

The United Nations, the African Union, international non-governmental organizations and individual Member States have been strong and close allies in helping the North and South work towards peace, development and human rights. Our continuing commitment will be essential as we go forward. Together, let us stay true to the cause of peace, justice and opportunity for all. Together, let us say to the citizens of our newest Member State, "You now sit with us. We stand with you".

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Rwanda, who will speak on behalf of the African States.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): It is a great honour and a privilege for me to speak on behalf of the African States at this historic moment for the United Nations and for Africa. I congratulate the Republic of South Sudan on the proclamation of its independence on Saturday and on its admission today as the 193rd State Member of the United Nations.

The people of South Sudan have demonstrated courage and resilience over decades of civil war and bloody struggle, and I commend them for the sense of responsibility they showed last January in massively and peacefully participating in the referendum for their self-determination.

This is a lesson for the United Nations and for its Members. No matter how many years a conflict may last, no matter how much sorrow and bitterness it may cause, ultimately, with courage and determination, "there should be laughter after pain, there should be sunshine after rain", to quote a popular rock ballad. After decades of pain, with two and half million people martyred for independence, we are now celebrating the birth of a nation — sunshine for a people and a smile for younger generations.

This resounding success would not have been achieved without the remarkable leadership of two heads of State, two remarkable statesmen: President Salva Kiir Mayardit of South Sudan and President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir of the Sudan. They have demonstrated over the years that they are men of commitment, men of peace and men of honour. Against

all odds, they managed to put an end to one of the longest civil wars on our continent and steered the peace process, from the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 to the successful organization of a transparent referendum in 2011.

As we commemorate those who lost their lives in the Sudanese civil war, I cannot fail today to pay tribute to the leaders of Anyanya I and of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, particularly Gordon Muortat Mayen and John Garang, who, wherever they may be, are surely more than happy at this successful outcome to their struggle.

We are today celebrating the admission of the fifty-fourth African State to membership of the United Nations. While we rejoice at the victory of freedom and dignity over war, we cannot forget that the Republic of South Sudan is a new State that is facing enormous challenges. The scars of the civil war are still palpable, and the community of nations has the duty to support this newborn State in the process of securing and consolidating peace, creating a democratic State and achieving development by reducing poverty, building infrastructures and putting the country on the right track to prosperity.

The South Sudanese, I believe, demonstrably have the leadership, strength of will and resources to rapidly move forward and to secure the heroic ideals they have fought for decades to achieve. They have added to the annals of history the notion of independence through a negotiated and democratic referendum.

In that respect, we express the hope that the Republic of South Sudan, together with its sister country the Republic of the Sudan, will soon settle the issues that are outstanding in connection with the implementation of the CPA. Those issues include a cessation of hostilities and a political settlement in Southern Kordofan, the final status of Abyei in accordance with the CPA, the demarcation of the North-South boundary, and political consultation on Blue Nile. We further encourage the two Governments and the two peoples, united by the same Nile streaming through their land, to smoothly address other post-secession arrangements, such as the issue of nationality, free movement of people, and the establishment of and respect for agreements on oil and petroleum resources.

Let me conclude by expressing our sincere appreciation to Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General, for his personal involvement in the Sudan peace process since his appointment and for his wisdom in choosing the right men in the right places. Indeed, this historic event could not have been celebrated without the tireless efforts of Haile Menkerios, his Special Representative for the Sudan, and of former President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, Chair of his panel on the referendums in the Sudan. This is one of the reasons for the unanimous endorsement by the African Group of the Secretary-General's candidature for a second term.

Similarly, allow me to voice our gratitude to another son of Africa, former President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, for the tremendous work he has done at the helm of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel to support and facilitate both parties in their negotiations aimed at the full and just resolution of the remaining CPA-related issues — a prerequisite for a lasting peace.

Finally, we extend our heartfelt appreciation once again to President Mayardit as he leads the new Republic in building a democratic, just and prosperous society. We, Africa, will stand by him.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Talaibek Kydyrov, Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Kydyrov (Kyrgyzstan): I have the great honour, on behalf of the Asian Group and in my capacity as Chair of the Group for the month of July, to welcome the adoption of resolution 65/308, entitled "Admission of the Republic of South Sudan to membership in the United Nations", submitted by the delegation of the Republic of Rwanda in its capacity as Chair of the African Group.

The Member States of the Asian Group welcome the establishment of the Republic of South Sudan on 9 July 2011, when it proclaimed its independence, and reaffirm their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the Republic of South Sudan.

The Asian Group recognizes the vital role of the United Nations in supporting the Republic of South Sudan in its efforts to consolidate peace and prevent a return to violence and, therefore, in developing at the

earliest a strategy in support of national peacebuilding priorities, in order to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development.

In view of that, the Asian Group welcomes resolution 1996 (2011), adopted by the Security Council at its 6576th meeting, on 8 July, and the establishment, as of 9 July, of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) for an initial period of one year to help the new nation in its long-term State-building and development.

The Group also welcomes the appointment by the Secretary-General of his Special Representative for the Republic of South Sudan, and expresses its confidence that the Secretary-General, through his Special Representative, will coordinate all activities of the United Nations system in the Republic of South Sudan, and support a coherent international approach to a stable peace and economic development in the Republic of South Sudan.

We welcome the strong commitment of both the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan to peaceful coexistence in order to achieve stability and mutual prosperity, and to engaging in dialogue to resolve the outstanding issues.

The Asian Group expresses its appreciation to the African Union and subregional organizations for their active engagement in consolidating peace and security, both in the Sudan and in South Sudan, and encourages them to continue these efforts.

The Asian Group welcomes the recommendation of the Security Council in its resolution 1999 (2011), adopted on 13 July, that the Republic of South Sudan be admitted to membership of the United Nations. On behalf of the Asian Group, I have the honour to express our strong and full support for the adoption of resolution 65/308, which we believe will bring long-term stability to both countries and the region as a whole.

In conclusion, let me express our sincere congratulations to the people and the country of South Sudan for this historic event and wish them real prosperity and a better future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Estonia, who will speak on behalf of the Eastern European States.

Mr. Kolga (Estonia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States to welcome the Republic of South Sudan as the 193rd State Member of the United Nations.

As we all know, the journey of South Sudan to this Hall has been neither easy nor short. The presence of the delegation of South Sudan here today, headed by Vice-President Riek Machar Teny-Dhurgon, is therefore all the more appreciated at this historic moment. The referendum in January was a clear sign that the people of South Sudan are united in their dream for self-determination. Almost 99 per cent of those who expressed themselves voted for sovereignty. This weekend, we saw the dream come true, with people in Juba celebrating when independence was officially declared and President Salva Kiir sworn into office.

South Sudan stands at the end of one era today, but only at the beginning of an even more important one, which is transition to a fully functional, responsible and prosperous nation State. The members of the Group of Eastern European States are prepared to work in close cooperation with South Sudan on this road.

We would also like to take this opportunity to commend the Government of the Sudan for its constructiveness throughout the referendum process and to count on its continued cooperation in the future. We would like to call on both sides to engage in resolving all the outstanding issues related to the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in an expedited manner.

Last but not least, once again we would sincerely like to congratulate the people and the Government of South Sudan and to wish them a warm welcome to the family of sovereign nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Brazil, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I have the honour to express our warmest welcome to the Republic of South Sudan as the 193rd Member of the United Nations. We extend our greetings at this historic meeting to His Excellency Mr. Riek Machar Teny-

Dhurgon, Vice-President of the Republic of South Sudan.

This is a fine moment for all Sudanese, for the African continent and for the United Nations. The admission of South Sudan to the Organization is the culmination of a long process to bring peace and stability to all Sudanese. The peoples of the Sudan, both North and South, and their leadership are to be commended for this successful outcome. As we congratulate them, we also encourage them to fulfil the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security and working together for the development of their societies.

The fact that the Government of the Sudan was the first to recognize the independence of South Sudan bodes well for a future of cooperation and mutual respect, which we all want to support and to help usher in. We are encouraged by the commitment and desire of both parties to the resolution of the pending issues of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). We appreciate the important role played by the African Union throughout the process that led to the CPA and during its implementation. We will continue to support the efforts of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel, under the leadership of former President Thabo Mbeki, to assist the two States in resolving outstanding issues.

We also praise the tireless efforts of the United Nations, and in particular of the Security Council, in helping the Sudanese people in their journey. We must continue to do so.

In welcoming the Republic of South Sudan to the United Nations, the Latin American and Caribbean States renew their historical and cultural bonds with Africa and their commitment to, and solidarity with, the continent's economic, social and political development.

We note with great satisfaction the solemn commitment of the Republic of South Sudan to abiding by and fulfilling the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations. We stand ready to cooperate closely with the Government and people of South Sudan in all areas of United Nations activity. They can count on our solidarity and our full support.

On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I express our best wishes for success,

peace and prosperity to the Government and people of the Republic of South Sudan.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): It is a special honour for me to welcome, on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, the Republic of South Sudan as the 193rd Member of the United Nations.

This is a truly historic moment and the beginning of a new chapter in the long history of South Sudan, whose people have taken the democratic decision to assume their independence and to take their place in the family of sovereign nations. The peaceful referendum for South Sudan's independence and the declaration of independence on 9 July 2011, witnessed by numerous dignitaries from all over the world, were the culmination of a process to settle a long-standing conflict and to achieve peace in South Sudan, in conformity with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in 2005.

As we witness the birth of a new State, we also see the challenges ahead. We encourage South Sudan's leaders to embrace pluralism and diversity and to lay the foundation for a democratic, fair and inclusive society based on the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We encourage the Governments and the peoples of the Republic of South Sudan and of the Republic of the Sudan in their efforts to address post-independence issues. We trust that the authorities of the two countries will swiftly reach good-neighbourly agreements, for the benefit of their peoples and the wider region.

The Group of Western European and other States looks forward to South Sudan playing an active and constructive role in the work of the United Nations. We pledge to continue working closely with the Republic of South Sudan with a view to achieving durable peace, prosperity, and justice and to meeting the needs and expectations of its people.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): On Saturday, I had the privilege of standing in Juba and

watching as the huge, beautiful flag of the Republic of South Sudan was raised for the first time. The crowd roared, and in that wave of joy one could hear a new nation claiming its voice.

Today, that same flag will fly proudly among 192 others. South Sudan will take its rightful place among the community of sovereign nations. On behalf of the United States, the host country to the Organization, and the American people, I warmly welcome the Republic of South Sudan as the newest Member of the United Nations.

This historic and hopeful day was reached only after great suffering and almost unimaginable loss. The independence of the world's newest country is a testament to the people of South Sudan. It is also an inspiration to all who yearn for freedom. May the memory of South Sudan's own struggle for liberty always serve as a reminder to us to insist on the universal rights of all people, to remember those still in shackles, to lift up the hungry and the desperate and to bring hope to the broken places of the world.

South Sudan's statehood is new, but its friendship is not. The bonds between the American people and the people of South Sudan go back many decades. The United States will remain a steadfast friend as South Sudan works to pursue peace, strengthen its democracy and provide opportunity and prosperity for all of its citizens. We look forward to working alongside South Sudan as it shoulders the rights and the responsibilities of a full and sovereign member of the community of nations.

At the United Nations in September 2010, President Obama said, "After the darkness of war, there can be a new day of peace and progress". Today, like Saturday, is such a day for the people of South Sudan. We will support them as they work for an enduring peace rooted in coexistence between two viable States. We will stand by them as they forge the conditions for lasting democracy, prosperity and justice. And we will partner with them as they seek to meet the high hopes of their citizens that have been raised along with their flag.

On behalf of the United States of America, let me say again, congratulations, and welcome.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Osman (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): As the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan, I should like once again to congratulate the Republic of South Sudan and to reaffirm, as we did on 8 July — the day before the proclamation of the independence of the Republic of South Sudan — our recognition of that country. I said yesterday that we are members of the same family. We in the north are called the Republic of the Sudan; the name of the new State is the Republic of South Sudan. We have Sudan in common. We are all Sudanese and will remain Sudanese, as I said yesterday.

While we are the same family, that family has grown and now has two homes — one in the north and one in the south. It is to that end that we have worked. I have a very clear message of solidarity, cooperation and coordination for the well-being of our two peoples to convey to the international community. Our two peoples have much in common — their history, blood, culture and society. These will remain the bases of our cooperation with the Republic of South Sudan.

We have turned a new page of our history, and we extend our hand to all. This issue has cast a long shadow over our relations with many States, but as this new page turns, we and our brothers in South Sudan have put bitterness and the wounds of war behind us. We look forward to the future and to excellent relations with all the countries that have been affected, in particular the larger States.

We know that we are living in an era of globalization, in which all interests are interrelated. We will respect the interests of other parties, in the hope that they will respect ours, including our diversity and the diversity of opinions, which should in no way affect the situation.

As President Al-Bashir has said, we will make every possible effort to provide whatever assistance we can to the new State of the Republic of South Sudan. We are its closest neighbour in our mother continent, not just geographically but also in terms of our feelings and spirit.

I would like to conclude by saying that this outcome would not have been possible without the contributions of leaders on both sides — President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir in the North and, in the South, the late John Garang de Mabior, President Salva Kiir Mayardit, Riek Machar Teny-Dhurgon, Deng Alor

Kuol, David Deng Athorbei, Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth and others. I pay tribute to them all.

**Address by Mr. Riek Machar Teny-Dhurgon,
Vice-President of the Republic of South Sudan**

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Riek Machar Teny-Dhurgon, Vice-President of the Republic of South Sudan.

Mr. Riek Machar Teny-Dhurgon, Vice-President of the Republic of South Sudan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the great pleasure to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Riek Machar Teny-Dhurgon, Vice-President of the Republic of South Sudan, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Machar Teny-Dhurgon (South Sudan): I am both honoured and humbled to stand here today to convey the profound gratitude of the people and Government of the Republic of South Sudan to the members of the General Assembly, who have just voted in favour of South Sudan's accession to membership of the United Nations. We are particularly grateful to the Republic of Rwanda for proposing, on behalf of Group of African States, the resolution that the Assembly has just adopted, as well as to the Republic of South Africa for introducing the resolution.

As a new Member of the United Nations, the Republic of South Sudan undertakes to respect all of its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. I pledge to the Assembly today that the Republic of South Sudan will be a responsible member of the international community and will respect all of its obligations under international law. We are working to accede as quickly as possible to all relevant international conventions and treaties, not least those related to human rights.

As we celebrate this moment, we also honour the memory of our citizens who are no longer with us, not least my comrade John Garang de Mabior. Twenty-eight years ago, Mr. Garang, alongside other brave and resolute leaders of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Sudan People's Liberation Army, launched a valiant struggle for liberation. That struggle

cost our people millions of lives and untold suffering. Their sacrifices will not be forgotten.

Eventually, in 2005, the struggle culminated in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to the negotiation and signing of the CPA, including the United States, Kenya, Ethiopia, the United Kingdom, Norway and many others, including, of course, the United Nations itself.

The Agreement provided for a self-determination referendum to take place. That referendum was duly held beginning on 9 January 2011, and was conducted according to the highest international standards. More than 98 per cent of the votes were cast in favour of separation. On 9 July, the Republic of South Sudan declared its independence and was duly recognized as a sovereign State.

We are deeply aware that we would not have been able to reach this point without the commitment and support of our many friends. We say thank you from the bottom of our hearts to all of the countries and multilateral and non-governmental organizations, and those who fund them, which helped us during our long journey and were committed to securing peace and security in our country. We pay tribute to the member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the IGAD Partners Forum, the African Union and its High-Level Implementation Panel, the European Union, the Arab League of States and the United Nations for their steadfast support and guidance to all of the Sudanese people in their long search for permanent peace.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement implementation process has involved many challenges. We are grateful to President Thabo Mbeki, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and the Governments of the United States, Norway and the United Kingdom, among others, for their work in support of the process. We also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his constant focus on the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. We express our appreciation to the members of the Security Council for recently adopting a resolution mandating a new peace consolidation mission in South Sudan. And we thank the General Assembly for its willingness to support and supplement the work of that mission through the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

Those efforts are an important example of unity and collaboration among all peoples in the pursuit of peace. They also demonstrate the importance of respecting the right of all peoples to self-determination. On behalf of the people of South Sudan and on my own behalf, there are no words sufficient to express the depth of our gratitude. Through their persistence and dedication, they have helped to bring an end to one of Africa's longest civil wars. Their continued efforts and unyielding support will be crucial to sustain the peace.

I would also like to pay tribute today to Field Marshal Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan, for his wisdom in signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, for proceeding with its implementation — in particular the holding of the self-determination referendum — and for courageously accepting the outcome of the referendum vote. We also applaud and welcome the Republic of the Sudan's decision to be the first State to recognize the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of South Sudan.

It is our deepest and most sincere wish to resolve all outstanding matters between the North and the South swiftly and peacefully. We do not harbour bitterness towards our former compatriots. We remain partners in peace and committed to the principles of good neighbourliness. We will work out our differences through dialogue and in a spirit of cooperation. In particular, we must agree on mechanisms for continued cooperation, the demarcation and mutually beneficial management of the common border and the final status of Abyei.

We will continue to work together with the Republic of the Sudan to seek justice for the people of Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. Our fundamental hope and desire is to see peaceful coexistence between the two neighbouring States of the Sudan and South Sudan. Both States must be viable and stable. We will strive to build a future in which our two countries can work cooperatively in peace with one another and be mutually supportive.

After many years of war, we want our new country to be a force for peace in our region. We shall live in peace with all our neighbours. To them, I say that the Republic of South Sudan will be a partner in all human endeavours that promote security, justice,

liberty, common peace and prosperity. Let us all work together towards such ends.

With that in mind, we urge our brothers in Ethiopia and Eritrea to resolve their differences peacefully and amicably. We appeal to our brothers and sisters in Somalia to seek lasting peace. We salute all those who work to build democracy and the rule of law from the ground up. We encourage all countries of the region to come together to eradicate the scourge of the Lord's Resistance Army. We will also join our regional partners and the rest of the world in the fight against terrorism.

While we work to foster peace in our region, we must also build a strong and viable nation at home. We have made a solemn commitment to democracy, pluralism, inclusiveness, the rule of law, and the freedoms of thought, belief and expression. We will embrace tolerance and unity. We will be patriotic regardless of our cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Our diversity will be a source of pride and strength and the basis upon which we protect everyone's right to think and speak freely.

We must not allow the threat of instability to deter us. President Salva Kiir Mayardit has reiterated his declaration of amnesty to all those who have taken up arms for whatever reason, so that they can join us in the work of building our new nation. We want a peaceful nation. We know that that means including all voices in our Government.

The Transitional Constitution, signed by President Kiir on 9 July, will be the starting point for an extensive consultation process to produce a permanent constitution for the Republic of South Sudan. It must be a constitution that fulfils the aspirations of all our people. Those consultations and the enactment of the permanent constitution will take place under a broad-based Government, to be appointed in the near future. Our Government will prioritize the public interest. Transparency and accountability will be central.

We have a daunting agenda in front of us. We must first fulfil our responsibility to provide security and extend the rule of law. We must also transform our rural areas. Agriculture will be a major area of investment and the basis on which we diversify our economy. We must provide free universal basic education to all our children. We must extend primary health care across the whole of South Sudan. We must

build our physical infrastructure, with a focus on roads. We must build our institutions in a culture of transparency. We must enhance the role of women and their purpose in society. And we must enable internal reconciliation and unity.

When we started our journey, we could hardly imagine that the road would lead us to this point, however much we hoped. Now, we must move forward together to fulfil our people's aspirations. We aspire to a South Sudan where children go to school without fear. We aspire to a South Sudan where every house is provided with electricity and water. We aspire to a country where everybody has access to health care and where every family has enough food on the table. We aspire to a South Sudan where all our sons and daughters live in brotherhood and sisterhood and where our nation lives at peace with our neighbours and the world.

That is our aspiration. Our task from this moment forward is to make it a reality. To our partners and friends, we are grateful for their continued help in that endeavour, which is both welcome and needed. We very much appreciate their dedication to date and their

renewed commitment to continue with their support. We can assure them that their investments will be protected, their efforts respected and their advice heeded.

We now dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to building a better future for our children. With the help and support of the international community together here today, we are confident of our success.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Republic of South Sudan for the statement that he has just made.

Mr. Rick Machar Teny-Dhurgon, Vice-President of the Republic of South Sudan, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): To mark this historic moment, I should like to inform Member States that the flag of the Republic of South Sudan will be raised at a ceremony that will take place in front of the delegates' entrance immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.